

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. V.

BOSTON, MAY, 1897.

No. 12

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second-class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

GEO. H. ELLIS, PRINTER, 141 FRANKLIN ST., BOSTON.

CONTENTS OF NO. 12.

THE DEBT OF HEAVEN TO EARTH	145
CHRISTIAN FRUITFULNESS	145
THE STILL HOUR	148
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB	148
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL	153
THE BIBLE CLASS	154
AMUSEMENT COLUMN	155
IMPORTANT NOTICES	156

THE DEBT OF HEAVEN TO EARTH.

Lord, leadeth not this desert land
To our bright home with thee?
Dost thou not mean thy pilgrim band
The Golden Gates to see?
Yet may we carry to our home
Gifts in the desert given:
Thou wouldst not have thy pilgrims come
All empty to thy heaven.
Bright angels, on your store alone
We shall not need to live;
We bring you something of our own,
Our God's dear gifts we give.
We bring you each endeavor fair
That made earth's darkness shine:
Each triumph o'er the foe ye share,
Each victory divine.
Each precious, pure delight that made
The Vale of Tears less sad
Doth help the joys that never fade,
Doth make the angels glad.
O happy golden hours below,
Your glory hath not gone:
The grateful years eternal flow
More bright because ye shone.

Dear Lord, whose grace on earth we taste,
Whose glory down doth come,
Thou meanest not these gifts for waste:
May we not bear them home?

May we not, richly laden, make
The wealth of heaven the more?
And, bringing gifts divine, partake
The sweet celestial store?

—*T. H. Gill.*

CHRISTIAN FRUITFULNESS.

Christian fruitfulness is the mingled work of God and man, of the seed sown and the preparation of the soil. There is an exact analogy in the product of human character. We are the result of outward impressions which we have received, and of the work of our mind upon those impressions. Our Christian life is the result of impressions made on us by God, and the energy of our spirit upon them. What are these? There is first the outward impression made on us by the life of Christ. We are saturated with that life from infancy. It speaks to us through every great event of life: in the very constitution of our social existence its voice is continually heard.

Then there is the work of the conscience of society. By its daily work, educated as it has been by centuries, God sows in our hearts certain large principles of right and wrong, without the growth and maintenance of which we run to moral ruin.

There is also the hourly work of God's indwelling spirit on our spirit. Many of us feel that inwardly we are not alone; that there is some one with us who makes influential toward our growth all the good impressions we receive from without,—those which come, we know not how, like the rain and wind and light upon the earth; those also which in moments of sensitive-

ness we receive from the beauty in calm or the beauty in terror of nature; those of noble humanity which we daily receive from contact with lover and friend and acquaintance, from home and from society; not only those impressions which steal insensibly into us, but also those which we drink in from direct religious teaching. If our hearts be good and honest and open, we are conscious every day of One who is sowing in us seed after seed, till our heart becomes a garden of the Lord, and brings forth the fruit of the spirit, thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold.

The sowing in the heart of this kind is from without, and is of God's fatherhood. But the reception and the growth of the seed into the plant are the work of the energy of our own will supported by the divine energy. It is chiefly an energy of resistance to that which may harm the seed or destroy it. Take, for example, any of the words of God that fall upon our hearts like seeds upon the ground. A great poet tells us that in his youth, returning late from a dance, the glory of the sunrise burst upon him; and he saw earth, sea, and mountains drenched in empyrean light. He looked, and to the brim his heart was full. "I made no vows," he says,—

"But vows

Were then made for me, bond unknown to me
Was given that I should be, else sinning greatly,
A dedicated spirit."

That kind of impression does not come to us as it comes to a poet; but it is common enough, quite common enough to take as an example of many others. To keep the pure and noble feeling of that hour, to keep the sense that God calls to us out of the clear beauty of the morning to do our work for him, is part of the honor of life and its use. Cherish it, guard it; for it is in danger of being carried away before it has sunk deep enough into the soil of the heart to take root therein. The light things of life that pounce on it like birds; the heavy feet of the coarse commonplaces of the world that go by like passengers over a path; all the matters of society,—the friend who comes in to gossip an hour away, the new book that excites you, the morning letters, a bit of rough business, an afternoon's gayety, the laughter of the world at senti-

ment of any kind, the events of the day,—these devour or crush the seed. What has become of it when you go to rest at night? It is not there. The birds of the air have devoured it: the trampling of the world has crushed it under foot.

I do not say, Get rid of all these things out of your day. That is impossible. The birds must fly about you, the passer-by wander over your heart, and often you must attend to them. But do not let them carry away your impression. Guard it, be tender of it. Cover it out of the way of the world. It would be best to spend the day quietly if you could, for God has visited you. But, if you cannot, say to yourself: "This precious good of the soul is mine: it has come from heaven. It shall be mine forever." And in the midst of the day's work and pleasure retire at times into your heart to see if it is there, safe and fresh as when you received it. And, when you go to bed, kneel and thank God for sowing this seed. Then the thing will sink deep, you will have it for life. You will have kept it in an honest and good heart, and it will bear fruit sixtyfold. This is our resistant energy.

Again, suppose the seed has sunk deep down into the soul, and that it springs up in earnest, and brings forth acts that correspond to the impression. The question then is, Will it last? And Christ speaks of two things which are likely to destroy it. One is sharp trial: another is the wearing influence of the cares of the world and the deceiving power of wealth.

Trial is the first. There are some trials and temptations so tremendous that they are too much for men and women if they but dip their foot into them. The only chance is running away from them. It is not those that Christ means, though he does speak of the sun rising with a burning heat. He means the ordinary commonplace trials and temptations of life, and he suggests the mode of resistance to these when he says the seed withered for want of depth of earth. You are certain to be tried and tempted. The daily work of nature, as it meets you in disease or death, the daily events of life which challenge your decision for right or wrong, are both of them trials and temptations to us all. They come, and you are troubled more or less, forced into battle, forced to decide; and in the worry,

confusion, irritation, in the burning of the sun, what becomes of the growing seedling, what of the new life you hoped for, what of the thoughts that rose above the world? They wither away. When the temptation has gone by, they are forgotten. How may we avoid, guard against that? Well, there is but one way,—by gaining depth of character, depth of earth. And that is the result of steady effort day by day on those outer circumstances of life which beset us, and the acting with regard to them in a clear, earnest, actual manner, desiring to get the good out of them and to put aside or contend with their evil,—above all, not hiding away from them, but always thinking, These things are part of the education which God is giving me, not to save my own soul especially, but that I may be able so to live as to save others. If we do that out of an honest and good heart with patience, we are certain to have that depth of earth in our soul which, when the heat of trial falls on us, will keep the seedlings of God from withering.

Yet, if the seed grow up into a harvest and we are really on the side of God, and not of the world, there is still something more to resist; and the something is well marked by Christ. The seed is among thorns. It springs up, it grows, it brings forth fruit. But it brings no fruit to perfection. It is choked with the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. Day by day the worries of life get hold on us,—cares of the household, cares for the children, cares of debt, cares of business, cares of social position, cares for our fame or our position, cares that we invent in nervousness, cares that we magnify out of little things into great, troubled,—troubled with much serving or much avoiding or much preventing, till we bring no fruit to perfection. There is no harm in these things one by one, but accumulated, dwelt on, magnified, they fritter away the Christian life. We have no time to give to God, no time to think of the quiet things which are great, no deep interest in the ideal life of Jesus nor any pursuit after it, no care for the great interests of humanity. Can fruitful corn grow in such a life? No: rather starved ears, brittle stems, thin and poor corn; loving deeds half done, faiths half believed in, ideas half realized, "prayers

blown wide by gales of care." Oh, how we lose life! for what trifles do we sacrifice our plenteousness! For the sake of the thorns we surrender the life-blood of the wheat. Choked with cares, we bring no fruit to perfection.

Still greater is the evil riches do by their deceiving power. The more riches, the more danger. They do not prevent the good seed altogether, but they prevent it coming to perfection. The harvest of God is more choked by the meannesses or by the extravagance of riches than by the misery, even by the guilt, of poverty.

One thing is needful. It is the only thing worth caring for with all one's might. It is to love that which is true and of good report and pure and lovely with all the powers of the soul and all the actions of the life; to love these things embodied in man, and finally in God; to love, wherever found, the divine in humanity, and to put everything else below the doing of that love. Then we shall not be troubled overmuch with the cares of this world: we shall take them as they come, and conquer them; for they yield to carelessness of them as they yield to nothing else, if that carelessness of them grows out of care for the highest and most perfect things. Nor then can riches deceive us. In giving them away heartily and with the intelligence of love, and in never using them for ourselves, we make use of the only means in the world which will take away from them their deceiving power. "Make to yourselves friends out of the Mammon of unrighteousness." What, friends? Why, souls saved, lives rescued, hope given, aspiration kindled, the gratitude and joy and faith and human love into which, by giving it away, you have transmuted wealth. Its sting is then gone forever, for itself has gone.

Such is a part of the energy of the soul upon the word of God,—an energy of steady resistance. Then, having resisted, the seed grows and brings forth fruit; for now the soil of the heart is good. Then comes the joy of ardent and delightful receiving. Every word of God sent to us by conscience within; every word of God sown in our hearts by the events of the world's life,—by the history of each day, by the history of nations; every revelation of God that falls into our soul from the influences of nature,

in storm or calm or beauty; every word that drops like a seed into us from humanity,—from the love and joy and faith and hope and innocence and self-sacrifice and noble endurance of men and women and children, from the books men write and the great deeds they do, from the Christ-like spirit of their lives and of their work,—is now received with ardor into a deep soil in an honest and good heart, springs up at once, is watered with patience, and brings forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred fold.

And we are men with a harvest. So at last we shall have our reward. What is that reward? Not one which shall feed selfishness or make us hug ourselves with the thought of our salvation. But this altogether glorious one: God gathers our wheat into his garner, that with it he may feed mankind.—*Stopford A. Brooke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

In pastures green? Not always: sometimes he
Who knoweth best in kindness leadeth me
In weary ways, where heavy shadows be.

And by still waters? No, not always so:
Of times the heavy billows round me blow,
And o'er my soul the waves and billows go.

But, when the storm beats loudest, and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standeth by,
And whispers to my soul, "Lo! it is I."

Above the tempest wild I hear him say,
"Beyond the darkness lies the perfect day:
In every path of thine I lead the way."

So, whether on the hill-tops high and fair
I dwell, or in the sunless valleys where
The shadows lie, what matter? *He* is there.

—From "*Heavenward.*"

The heart has a deeper wisdom than the head. Its faith, its hope, its love, predict and assure a better future than the mere intellect can foresee.

Therefore is love also a true prophet. It looks through the darkness of the present,—through pain, disappointment, trial, sorrow, bereavement, loneliness,—and sees all things working together for good. When we forget ourselves, and love others; when we forget our selfishness, and share in God's interest in mankind; when we throw ourselves into

life, and follow Christ in his trust in God,—then the heavens again smile. Then we look through all anxiety, and see good beyond. Then, when we lay our beloved in the grave, we have a hope full of immortality in our hearts. Mortality is swallowed up of life.

Many think they are not good enough to see their friends hereafter. But were they good enough here? What did you or I ever do to earn the tender, never-ceasing, never-resting love of our parents, the noble influence of our friends, the inspiration which has come to us from the wise, the reverent, the pure hearts who have made of us all that we are? If God gave us all this of his free grace here, we may trust that he will give us friendship and love hereafter.

The affections are a clothing and a home for the heart. God's method is to give us always better and higher affections. Human love leads up to divine love.

These may indeed be only tents to live in till we reach the promised land; but we know that, when these are struck and folded, we have a building of God waiting us beyond the veil of time. God, who provides the tent for us here, will provide the house there. He who gives us in this life the wonders and beauties of nature, the lessons of truth, the opportunities of action and endeavor, the helps of friendship, the charm of love, the nobleness of life, and the pathos of death, will provide for us better things beyond, "which eye has not seen, nor ear heard."—*James Freeman Clarke, "Messages of Faith, Hope, and Love."*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.
2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.
3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated*, all books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall I send such a book to such a person?*" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have sent it*. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

A four-pound package is the most that can be sent by *mail*. The postage on four pounds of *magazines* is 16 cts., on four pounds of *books* 32 cts.

Postage on magazines and all periodicals (weighing less than four pounds), 1 cent for four ounces; on bound books, 1 cent for two ounces. *Paper books* are now sent by mail at the same rate as magazines, *when issued periodically*.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Cambridge Branch. Address Mrs. C. W. Kettell, 19 Brewster Street, Cambridge, Mass. Old correspondents will please address the members to whom they have formerly written. In order to receive books from the Cambridge Branch, it will be necessary henceforth to send a reference with the *first* request.

Juvenile.

Seven of the "Prudy" stories,—*"Little Prudy," "Sister Susy," "Cousin Grace," "Captain Horace," "Dotty Dimple," "Prudy Keeping House," "Dotty Dimple's Flyaway," "The Swiss Family Robinson," "Aunt Jo's Scrap Bag," "Little Men," "Little Women," "Sandford and Merton," "Mr. Rutherford's Children," "The Young Crusoe," "Rosamond," "Rollo Learning to*

Talk"; "Rollo's Museum"; "Rollo's Correspondence"; "Good Words for the Young"; "A Child's History of England," Dickens; "Little Content"; "Two School-girls"; "Parent's Assistant"; "Evenings at Home"; "One Day's Weaving"; "Little Rosy's Travels"; "History of the Robin."

Poetry.

"Tales of the Wayside Inn"; "Songs of Home"; "Legends of the Birds"; "The Poets of America"; "The Odes of Horace"; "Gems of German Verse" (translated); "The Golden Harp"; Watts's "Hymns."

Fiction.

"The Old Curiosity Shop"; "Our Mutual Friend"; "Oliver Twist"; "Bleak House"; "The Newcomes"; "Vanity Fair"; "An Earnest Trifler"; "Paul and Virginia"; "Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn"; "Zerub Throop's Experiment"; "Ships that Pass in the Night"; "Merle's Crusade"; "On the Edge of the Storm"; "Miss Wentworth's Idea."

Miscellaneous.

Ranke's "History of the Popes" (2 vols.); "Life and Society in America," Day; Vol. 12 "Littell's Living Age"; "From Egypt to Japan," H. M. Field; "Canoe and Saddle"; "Malcolm's Travels in South-east Asia"; "Charades"; Worcester's "Comprehensive Dictionary"; "A History of our own Times," McCarthy; "Pen and Ink Sketches," Chatterton; "The Book of Snobs"; "Amadeus," Valmann; "Andalusia"; "William Tell," Schiller; "Harold," a drama, Tennyson; "Synthetic Philosophy," Spencer; "Young Folks' History of United States"; "Book of Hymns"; "Testament and Psalms"; "Hymns of Praise and Prayer"; "Precious Thoughts," Ruskin; "General Sketch" (historical), Freeman; Harper's "Fourth Reader"; "Hospital Sketches," L. M. Alcott; "King Henry IV."; "Seaside and Fireside Fairies"; "The Tourist in France."

The Newtonville Branch offer the following books. Address Miss Florence M. Pettee, Newtonville, Mass.

"Old Curiosity Shop," Dickens; "Marjorie Daw," T. B. Aldrich; "Heat," Tyndall; "The Naturalist on the Amazon," Bates; "Countess Kate," Yonge; "Spare

Hours," John Brown; "Due West," M. M. Ballou; "Tom Brown at Oxford," T. Hughes; "Russia under the Tsars," Stepniak; "A Cathedral Courtship," K. D. Wiggin; "The Young Stepmother," Yonge; "The Earthly Paradise," William Morris; "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays," Macaulay; Routledge's "Every Boy's Annual"; Saxe Holm's Stories; "Kismet"; "Among my Books," Lowell; "Gold Elsie," Wister; "Christmas at Greycastle"; "Population of an Old Pear-tree," E. Van Bruysell; Miss Parloa's "Young Housekeeper"; "Among the Pines," E. Kirke; "Agnes of Sorrento," H. B. Stowe; "Words in Season," Browning; "On the Authorized Version of the New Testament," Trench; Livingstone's "Travels in South Africa"; "The Parent's Assistant," Maria Edgeworth; "The Back Window of the Hotel St. Barbe," K. S. Macquoid; "Natural Phenomena and their Spiritual Lessons"; Works of Samuel Warren; "Life: Its Nature and Varieties," Grindon; "Yeast," Kingsley; "Rosamond," M. Edgeworth; "On Both Sides of the Sea"; "Christie Johnstone"; "Memoir of Alexis de Tocqueville" (2 vols.); "Man's Origin and Destiny," Lesley; "From Egypt to Japan," H. M. Field; "Oldport Days," Higginson; "Annual Record of Science and Industry," Spencer F. Baird; "Henry Esmond," Thackeray; "Sand-hills of Jutland," Hans Christian Andersen; "Phantastes," MacDonald; "The New Chemistry," J. P. Cooke, Jr.; "English Past and Present," Trench; "Queen Mab," Kavanagh; "The Testimony of the Rocks," Hugh Miller; "Charms and Counter-charms," "My Schools and Schoolmasters," Miller; "The Castle-builders"; "Travels in Central America," Mrs. M. F. Squier; "Astronomy of the Bible," O. M. Mitchell; "Autobiography of an Actress," Anna Cora Mowatt; Guizot's "History of Civilization"; "Flower Fables," L. M. Alcott; "Endeavors after the Christian Life," Martineau; "Mahomet and his Successors" (3 vols.), W. Irving; "Letters from Abroad," Miss Sedgwick; "On the Lessons in Proverbs," Trench; "Thiodolf, the Iclander," Fouqué.

The Brighton Branch offers the following books. Address Miss Carrie L. Murdock, Brighton, Mass. "Uncle Tom's Cabin"; "Only Girls," Virginia F. Townsend; "A French Country Family," translated by

Miss Mulock; "Canterbury Tales," Harriet Lee; "Nurse and Spy in the Union Army," Emma E. Edmonds; "The Jewish War, or the History of the Destruction of Jerusalem," Josephus (6 vols.); *Munsey's Magazine*, 1896; *Lippincott's*, 1896 (seven months); *Scribner's*, 1891-94 (incomplete).

The King's Chapel Branch of the Cheerful Letter Exchange offers fifteen copies of Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe," which will be sent to any one applying to Miss K. A. Homans, 164 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

I happen to have several copies of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* for July, 1885, containing an article about the *Dial* and its editors and contributors, which may be worth reading by those who are interested in the history of the Transcendental period (Emerson, Margaret Fuller, etc.). Also a number of copies of "Lessons on the Life of Jesus" (thirteen lessons) reprinted from *The Cheerful Letter* for the use of Sunday-school teachers. Also some humane education leaflets,—birds, cats, dogs, horses, etc. Sunday-school teachers may find these helpful. Address for these Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

(Do not write to Miss Clarke for anything except what she offers. All general requests go to the Book Club.)

REQUESTS.

READ DIRECTIONS AT BEGINNING OF BOOK CLUB BEFORE WRITING.

Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from:—

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please

write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Miss Eva J. Coleman, St. Just, Virginia, who is unable to attend school, would like reading.

Books, school-books, and good reading will be acceptable to Mr. James P. Martney, Deerfield, North Carolina, for two boys who are in need of the right influence.

Mrs. F. C. Dorn, Point Rock, Oneida County, New York, asks for Barnes's "Fifth Reader," Reed and Kellogg's "Grammar," and Harper's "Geography."

Any German reading will be appreciated by Mrs. C. Wick and Caroline Dorn, Point Rock, Oneida County, New York, also Mrs. M. P. Dethlefoen, Olympia, Washington, and Mrs. Dora Vietzen, Pine Street, Olympia, Washington.

Lizzie Smith, Chester Hill, Morgan County, Ohio, asks for Longfellow's, Whittier's, or Tennyson's poems.

Mrs. Julia P. Merriam sends the following names of young girls that would greatly appreciate good reading: Eva Daniels, Dora O. Toller, Mary Toller, Pequabuck, Connecticut.

Youth's Companion is asked for by Robert W. Stovall, Glade Springs, Virginia, and Minnie Shuffle, Glade Springs, Virginia.

Dumb Animals and *Every Other Sunday* will be thankfully received by Miss Alice E. Morris, Opelousas, Louisiana.

Any reading is asked for by Lilian N. Campbell, Vulcan, Virginia, Orange County. Also Edith Anderson, Highlands, North Carolina, and Miss Annie J. Tatum, Tatum, Virginia.

Mrs. A. Beck, 231 Erie Street, Camden, New Jersey, would like *Ladies' Home Journal*.

Can some one send a copy of "Heavenly Campfire" to Miss J. M. Shaver, Box 67, Albany, Missouri?

Mrs. Charles Chamberlain, Branch, Vermont, would like November and December numbers of *St. Nicholas* for 1895. Mrs. Chamberlain will pay postage.

Mrs. Sallie E. Taylor, The Hollow, Virginia, asks for reading for herself and children, ten and eight years of age.

Mrs. T. V. Reed, Spring Hill, Compton County, Province of Quebec, will be thankful for reading matter. Mrs. Reed lives in a lumber camp where good reading is very much needed.

I would like very much to receive the *Ladies' Home Journal* or any good magazine after it has been read, as I cannot subscribe; also "A Face Illumined," "His Sombre Rivals," or "Near to Nature's Heart," by E. P. Roe. Mrs. W. C. Murphy, Mountville, Ohio.

Miss Mary B. Pedigo, The Hollow, Virginia, asks for *Ladies' Home Journal* or any good magazine. Miss Pedigo will pay postage.

Mrs. H. D. Richardson, Rural Dale, Ohio, desires reading for herself and two boys eight and ten years of age.

Mrs. M. A. Leach, Midkiff, Sabine County, Louisiana, will be glad to receive the *Christian Register* and any reading.

Recitation books are asked for by Mrs. Minnie Perkins, Olympia, Wash., Mrs. Linnie Green, Sanco, Coke County, Texas, and Mrs. Mary Churchill, Hardy, Texas.

"Needle-craft, Artistic and Practical," "Needle and Brush, Useful and Decorative," published by Butterick Company, are particularly desired by Mrs. Minnie W. Armstrong, Edina, Missouri.

We have returned from Indian country, and still get much good reading from the many friends we made through *The Cheerful Letter*, to whom we are very thankful. I could not go to the Normal this term, so I must do the best I can at home. One of our neighbors was educated in a German university, and he is helping me out. He teaches correct Latin, arithmetic, and anything I wish to learn. I have all the Latin books I need, but would like to have any one of these, "History of United States," "History of France," "Exercise Manuals in Arithmetic," Wentworth's "School Alge-

bra," "Pronouncing Spelling book," "French Primer," "Elementary French Reader," Ollendorff's "German Grammar," "Beginners Spanish Lessons." Any one of these will be a great help to me. Lyman T. Hughes, Waterloo, Oklahoma.

Some time ago I received "The Lady of the Lake," by Scott, which we were so eager to read. We appreciate the gift so much. I desire to thank the Cheerful Letter Exchange for this book and other reading matter. It has been of so much comfort to us. Others have come begging for reading matter. We have given the address to some who needed reading and could not afford it, whom we knew were worthy of receiving it. I wish to recommend to your help for reading a young girl twelve years old who comes to me for books; also a mother of five children, who is very desirous of books for herself and children. They are not able to obtain them otherwise. Their addresses are: Miss Cora Ball, Vanndale, Arkansas; Mrs. George Wills, Vanndale, Arkansas. We shall soon move to a ranch seven miles west of here, so I cannot supply the little girl's needs longer. I would be so glad to receive any of Shakspeare's works for study. (Mrs.) R. Etta Jordan.

Only those who have been or are still "shut-ins" can understand what the Book Club has been to me, to be kept so nicely supplied with what goes so far toward making one of my chief pleasures in life. *The Cheerful Letter* is also a great pleasure to me, and my sincere thanks go to the friend who so kindly sends it to me. Many a weary hour of pain has been lightened for me by my books. My books are a source of pleasure to a great many, for I lend them to many friends. Our "old world" is growing tenderer, there is so much kind thought for God's suffering ones now. What a boon to so many who would otherwise spend such lonely, weary hours! I would be greatly obliged if some one would kindly send me "The Men of the Moss-hags," "Queechy," "Romance of Two Worlds," "Sorrows of Satan," "The First Violin," or any of Marion Crawford's or Ian Maclaren's works. Miss B. J. Robards, Clay, Granville County, North Carolina.

I have been visiting a shut-in whose name I once sent to receive reading matter, Miss

Julia Sinclair, Truro, Madison County, Iowa. Of course, my first question was, "Do you still receive reading matter from the *Cheerful Letter* friends?" She answered that she did not get very much now. She only receives one paper regularly: that is *Every Other Sunday*. Some Sunday-school class is sending her that. Once in a great while she receives a roll of papers, but not near enough to supply her with reading. So I thought I would write and tell the friends about her again. She does not care for deep reading: something simple and good pleases her better. She enjoys the paper *Every Other Sunday*. Then, when it is read, she "passes it on" to a little boy, living near. I have told about her being crippled and almost helpless. Nearly sixty years she has been a sufferer, and for the last two or three years she has been compelled to use opiates to relieve her sufferings. She is so patient and cheerful that it does one good to visit her. She is not able to do much, but does not feel satisfied unless she has some bit of work near her to pick up, when she feels like doing anything. She is so proud of all that has been sent her, especially a roll of silk pieces. She would like to receive *The Open Window*, and would like to join the shut-ins if she knew how. Please write to her, dear friends, and send her something interesting to read now and then. Mrs. Carrie Smith, Jamison, Iowa.

I am a widow with three children. The eldest is eleven and a half, the youngest eight. More than a year ago our home was burned, with all we possessed; and, as I want to educate my little ones, I would like educational works. History of any kind or geography I would be very glad to get. I live in a small mining camp, twenty miles from a church; and we have very little school here, my little ones being the only Americans here. My two oldest are in the "Fourth Reader," arithmetic, spelling, geography. My baby boy is in the "Second Reader," spelling, arithmetic (is in fractions, and lacks a month of being eight years old). I teach them at home, when there is no school. I cannot, at present, pay postage on any books, but will be truly thankful for any you can send me. Mrs. Eva von Wilson, San Pedro, Santa Fé County, New Mexico.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[Please send articles for this department during the first week of the month before the one in which they are to be published to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.]

PRESSING OUR BOYS INTO SERVICE.

"Mamma, am I your little helper boy?"

There is a touch of wistfulness in the voice and in the small, upturned face; but, at the assenting smile and kiss that meet his inquiry, the expression changes, and the little fellow trots off to his play, proud and happy.

I used to scold him, sometimes even punish him, for his childish heedlessness. When I wished him to play quietly about the room, he would be noisy; and all my severity could not make him remember to gather up and put away his toys when he had finished playing with them.

At last I hit upon an expedient. I had a long, serious talk with the child one day, telling him of how much work I had to do, and of how he might help me if he only would. He listened gravely, with a comprehension beyond his years, and promised to be very good. Since then the highest praise I can bestow upon him is to call him my little helper boy. He is only four years old, but he has always had a knack of carrying messages; and, besides doing this, he picks up odds and ends scattered about the room, amuses his baby-brother, and has learned to play quietly by himself with books, blocks, needle or pencil when I am too busy to be disturbed by his chatter. Of course, he forgets sometimes. What child would not? But he is immensely improved already, and he gets no harm from learning to amuse himself.

From my experience with him and observation of other children, I have reached the conclusion that mothers can hardly begin too early to make children helpful. Without committing the grave blunder of burdening the young shoulders with too heavy responsibilities, there may yet be certain duties given to them whose performance will bring happiness. This principle applies to the children of the well-to-do as well as to those of the poor, and to boys as well as to girls. It is taken for granted that the latter should be helpful, but I have found many ways in which a boy can be

made useful. One wee fellow of my acquaintance has won the title of Little Willingful from the cheerful alacrity with which he travels up and down stairs for papa's slippers or mamma's gloves or purse, or runs to pick up baby's toys. When the baby takes his morning bath, his "big" brother is always close by to hand the powder-box or the brush and comb or the tiny garments. He helps gather together the shoes, stockings, etc., left from the morning toilet of his elders, and with a small brush does his part gallantly in the dusting. At night he picks up his toys, and stores them away in his own especial cupboard, and in many other ways makes his little hands and feet of appreciable value in the light work of the house.

All these things and many others may small boys do. They may save the mother's weary back by collecting the scraps of thread and bits of paper from the floor, by restoring light pieces of furniture to their places, and even by using a dustpan and brush upon the carpet or matting. They may learn to undress themselves at night, and to put on some of their clothes in the morning. There will be mistakes at first, and an impatient mother will probably feel that it is less trouble to do the work herself than to sit by and watch the blundering little fingers stumble over the unaccustomed tasks. But the discipline is as good for her as the occupation is for them.

Upon the thoroughness of this early training may depend many of the habits of later years. No untidiness or slackness should be allowed, and the principle should be inculcated that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well. The manual dexterity acquired in early childhood is rarely lost. Small boys manifest no more awkwardness in handling the needle than do girls, and both are alike in their desire to "help mamma with the sewing." Now, in these years, before their school duties claim them, is the time to teach the embryo men the useful accomplishments of sewing on buttons, mending rips, and darning stockings. The knowledge will stand them in good stead in later years, when they are away from home, at college or in business.

Teach your boy early that there should be a place for everything, and that everything should be in its place. Give him a cup-

board or a closet or a big drawer of his own where he can keep his toys. Have nails in the closet low enough for him to hang his clothes on, and oblige him to put away his wrappings when he comes in from his walk or play. When he undresses at night, let him shake out each garment as he removes it, and hang it on his own little chair, ready to put on in the morning. As he grows older, let him, as far as possible, replace the buttons on his own clothes and shoes, and even darn his hose and repair his clothing under your personal supervision. It will make him more careful, and he will receive no harm from having a share in the training which the daughters of the house take as a matter of course. He may thank you some day if you initiate him into the mysteries of bread-making and the cooking of meats, the mixing of salads, etc., and familiarize him with bed-making and dish-washing. Such homely knowledge has more than once helped a man when more ornamental accomplishments failed to do him service.—*Christine Terhune Herrick, in Babyhood.*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

The lessons on the Life of Jesus are now concluded. Thirteen of them have been reprinted in tract form, which will always be given to any one interested in the study of the Gospels. More will probably be reprinted before long.

The next subject considered will be "The Book of Acts." We recommend to Bible students the following very simple method of beginning the study of this book. It is to make an index themselves of the contents of the chapters. The object of this is to obtain, before beginning to read, some clear idea of the contents of the book.

Here is one specimen, useful, of course, only to the maker, but given as a suggestion.

Chapter I. Conversation with Jesus; the ascension; Peter's address; choice of Matthias to take the place of Judas.

II. The day of Pentecost; Peter preaches, and many are baptized.

III. The lame man at the Beautiful Gate; Peter preaches in Solomon's porch.

IV. The priests arrest Peter and John,

and question them before Annas and Caiaphas; Peter and John answer boldly; the priests order them not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus; courageous answer of Peter and John. The priests let them go; conference and prayer among the disciples; "all things in common"; Barnabas.

V. Ananias and Sapphira; the sick laid in the shadow of Peter; the high priests put the apostles in prison; "the angel of the Lord" opens the prison doors, and they go down and preach in the temple; they are brought again before the council; speech of Gamaliel, and wise advice; the apostles are beaten and released; they depart rejoicing, and preach daily.

VI. Complaints about the widows; Stephen, Philip, and others chosen into the society; Stephen's "wonders and miracles"; he is arrested, and accused of blasphemy.

VII. Stephen's defence; ends with a stern reproof; he is stoned to death; "Saul."

VIII. Saul persecutes the disciples; Philip preaches in Samaria; Simon, the sorcerer, baptized; Peter and John sent to Samaria; Simon offers them money for the power to work miracles; Peter reproves him; Philip and the officer of Queen Candace; Philip preaches in many places.

IX. Saul goes to Damascus; his vision; Ananias comes to him; Saul preaches; the Jews seek his life; the disciples let him down the city wall in a basket; he returns to Jerusalem, and tries to join the disciples, but they are afraid to admit him until Barnabas intercedes; Paul goes to Cæsarea. "The churches" have "rest throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria"; (N.B. What does this mean?) Peter cures Eneas and raises up Tabitha; Peter stays in Joppa, in the house of Simon, a tanner.

X. Cornelius; his vision; Peter's dream; the messengers arrive from Cornelius; Peter goes with them; the Holy Ghost poured out on the Gentiles; Peter baptizes the household of Cornelius.

It is not God's purpose to make man merely worshipper, devotee, saint, to shut in all his energies to the exercises of faith, but to make him a citizen of the world, to fit him to live here, to meet and face and discharge every demand of duty, every complication of circumstance.

J. F. W. W.

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.]

Some of the following puzzles are culled from old magazines or have been picked up along the way from passers by.

ARITHMETICAL PUZZLE.

No. 1.

Combine six nines so as to make 100.

No. 2.

Arrange the ten digits, using each but once, so that their sum shall be 100. Also arrange the nine digits so that their sum shall be 100.

No. 3.

I am composed of five letters.
My first — my fifth gives my second,
My second + 1 gives my fourth,
Five times my first + five times my fifth
gives my third. My whole is funny.

No. 4.

From 45 take 45, and have 45 for an answer.

CONUNDRUM.

What is that which is so brittle that, if you only name it, you are sure to break it?

Why is an amiable and beautiful girl like one letter in deep thought, another approaching you, a third bearing a torch, a fourth singing psalms?

The six verses of the following charade describe the same word.

CHARADES.

I.

My first springs in the mountains,
My second springs out of the mountains,
My whole comes with a spring over the mountains.

II.

My first runs up the trees,
My second runs past the trees,
My whole spreads over the trees.

III.

My first runs on two legs,
My second runs without any legs,
My whole runs away, legs or no legs.

IV.

My first grows shorter and weaker as it grows older,
My second grows longer and stronger as well as older,
My whole is born and dies every year, and never grows any older.

V.

My first has no drops except when it drops down,
My second is full of drops all invisible,
My whole abounds in drops separate and visible.

VI.

To capture my first, men march after it.
To imprison my second, they march over it.
To catch my whole, they go through a march before it.

My first is often and often presented,
Yet is never a present, 'tis plain.
My second describes the erst tall grass
Lying ready for the wain.
My whole is restless and changing ever,
Type of perpetual motion,
As the surf comes rolling grandly in
From the boundless vast of ocean.

E. P. P.

Answers to puzzles in the April number.

ARITHMETICAL PUZZLE.

1,500, 800, 200, 500.

CROSS WORDS.

Graham, Eli, Ovid, Rod, Goal, Erie,
Elm, Llama, Inferior, Optic, Touch.

RIDDLE.

Jack and Jill.

Nothing fails in this world, not even the feeblest finger-stir of endeavor. P. C. M.

Creation is ever doing God's will. Only the human soul can choose to do it, because only the human soul can leave it undone.

H. W. F.

Self-forgetful activity in doing thy appointed work is a great refuge amid the cross-winds of worldly life. But beware of mischievous activity. P. C. M.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, May 7, at 10.30 A.M., at 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

All interested in this work are cordially invited to be present.

There will be no more meetings until farther notice.

Our Book Club department has grown so large that we shall ask of all who in the future write to us for books to send the name of some minister as a reference,—when possible, the minister of the church to which they belong.

The Treasurer asks as a favor that all addresses sent by subscribers shall be written very clearly. Sometimes she cannot decipher them.

We fear that some of our subscribers have the impression that by subscribing for *The Cheerful Letter* they will be sure to receive books. The Book Club has proved an attractive department of our paper; and many of our subscribers are interested in sending books to those who are unable otherwise to obtain them. But we engage only to keep the Book Club open for offers and requests, and that under certain conditions.

We remind all who send parcels or boxes with books, papers, etc., to correspondents or to libraries, that it is absolutely necessary to write at the same time to the receiver, enclosing the receipt which shows that the express or freight charges on the package have been paid. For want of this precaution, valuable packages have never been received. It is not probable that any of our *Cheerful Letter* friends send packages without prepaying them, but it is a common mistake of the express agents to charge the receiver for a prepaid package.

N.B.—PLEASE READ DIRECTIONS AT BEGINNING OF BOOK CLUB BEFORE WRITING FOR BOOKS.

Subscribers to *The Cheerful Letter* are kindly requested to send subscriptions to the *Treasurer*, not to the Editor.

In sending requests or offers of books, it is essential to address these communications to the *Book Club* (Secretary Mrs. W. B. Nichols). If addressed to the Editor these letters are in some cases postponed; in others altogether omitted. See directions in every number of *The Cheerful Letter*.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER,"—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 53 Linden Street, Brookline, Mass., or 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Miss Howe at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Louise Howe, as above. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Nichols; and to Miss Clarke only articles for insertion in the paper (not Book Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.